

U.S. Naval Asylum, Laning Hall  
(U.S. Naval Home, Laning Hall,  
Building No. 2)  
Southwest corner Gray's Ferry Avenue and  
Twenty-fourth Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1622 D

HABS  
PA,  
SI-PHILA,  
577D-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
PA  
SI-PHILA  
5770-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

UNITED STATES NAVAL ASYLUM, LANING HALL  
(United States Naval Home, Laning Hall, Building No. 2) HABS No. PA-1622-D

Location: Southwest corner of Gray's Ferry Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. The building is located approximately 400' northwest of Biddle Hall.

Present Owner: General Services Administration; surplus property since 1976.

Significance: The large, handsome hospital building was designed by the architect of the Philadelphia City Hall, John McArthur, Jr. It exhibits a combination of Second Empire and Italianate styling. It replaced the original hospital in the Biddle Hall.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1864-68.
2. Architect: John McArthur, Jr. (1823-1890).
3. Original and subsequent owners: From 1868 to 1976 the property was owned by the U.S. Navy. Today it is owned by the General Services Administration.
4. Alterations and additions:

1929-30:	Interior renovated
1938:	Hospital rehabilitated
(incomplete information)	

### PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

#### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a large hospital structure of the 19th century with interesting detailing. The floor plan consists of a center section and a pair of lateral wings.
2. Condition of fabric: The building has been well maintained for many years. However, since 1976 General Services Administration has been paying minimum attention to the building.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures approximately 325' (twenty-five bay front) x 85'. It is three stories high with a raised basement.
2. Foundations: Random ashlar, battered.
3. Walls: Red brick with brownstone trim and brick quoins. The brick is laid in common bond, with no headers.
4. Structural system, framing: Wooden framing.
5. Chimneys: Brick in rear portion of structure.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Wood doors.
  - b. Windows: Original sash was two-over-two lights, a predominant 19th century window sash. Brownstone sills and lintels with labels.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Mansard roof. Grey slate shingles in lower slope; tar and gravel in upper slope.
  - b. Cornice: Decorative brick "X" and "I" motifs on recessed panels.
  - c. Dormers: Dutch dormers on mansard roof. This includes the dormers on the entrance section.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Cross-shaped floor plan with a central stairway.
2. Stairways: The main stairway is typically mid-19th century in design. It is entirely cast-iron, except for the handrails which are mahogany.
3. Flooring: Yellow pine flooring covered with linoleum.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls and ceilings. Wood baseboards.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Wood doors.
- b. Windows: Not documented.

6. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: Central furnace, steam.
- b. Lighting: Electric fixtures.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

File No. 68-81, Governor's Office, U.S. Naval Home, Philadelphia, Pa., June 6, 1916, "Regulations of the United States Naval Home Philadelphia, Pa." Articles, 347, 351-2.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Jackson, Joseph. Early Philadelphia Architects and Engineers.

Prepared by:

William B. Bassett  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
May, 1965

Edited by:

Susan McCown  
Architectural Historian  
Historic American Buildings  
Survey  
August, 1984